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LETTER DATED 28 MARCH 1997 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF ALBANIA TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

Upon instructions from my Government I have the honour to communicate to you the following.

The situation in Albania remains serious. The control of the Government, law and order have yet to be achieved in a significant part of the country. A matter of grave concern is the humanitarian situation, further aggravated as a result of lack of security and the increasing need for basic humanitarian goods.

Considering the situation and upon the official appeal of the Government of Albania to a group of countries, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) agreed yesterday to support the willingness of some member States to participate with a military or a police force in the protection of humanitarian activities in Albania. The Albanian Government and the Albanian people highly appreciate this action of OSCE and the readiness of a number of countries to participate in that force.

Albania is looking forward to the arrival of such a force. Taking into consideration the situation in Albania, we feel that such a force must also have the necessary support and authorization of the Security Council of the United Nations.

In order to facilitate the Council's taking a decision, while details will be worked out in due course, I am authorized to mention some elements of a possible mandate for the deployment of this force. We would like the force to be composed of troops from a number of countries which have been addressed by the Albanian authorities and which have already expressed their willingness and readiness to join in a multinational force. The objective of the force will be to provide security for the delivery of humanitarian aid throughout Albania and to help create a durable safe environment for the safe provision of international assistance. In order to accomplish such an objective, the force will work in close cooperation with the relevant Albanian authorities. The force would perform such duties as accompanying humanitarian convoys, protecting international humanitarian personnel, protecting some key ports or airports where humanitarian goods are expected to enter Albania, guarding depots and

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other places where humanitarian goods are kept, and securing safe corridors for humanitarian convoys on parts of national roads.

The force would stay in Albania until the conditions on the ground make it possible for the Albanian Government to ensure the safe delivery of humanitarian goods, until the coming general elections. The Albanian Parliament will decide more precisely how short will be the temporary period during which the force will remain. With the measures the Government is taking, supported by the international community, we expect that the situation will soon be stabilized and that the country will return to normality.

In conclusion, I must stress the urgency of the matter. Albania needs the assistance of the international community now. We expect that the Security Council will be able to take promptly the right decision on Albania.

I have the honour to enclose as annexes to this letter the following material: updated information on the situation in Albania; decision 160, dated 27 March 1997, of the OSCE Permanent Council; and the conclusions of the meeting of the Council of the European Union, dated 24 March 1997.

May I ask for your kind assistance in having the present letter and its annexes circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Pellumb KULLA
Ambassador and Permanent Representative

Annex I

Updated information on the Albanian crisis

In the last couple of months, following the collapse of the pyramid investment schemes, the situation in Albania has deteriorated further, indeed to levels unprecedented in the history of the country. The structures of the Ministries of the Interior and Defence proved to be incapable of dealing with the situation, with the massive unrest which swept entire regions of the country. Those structures, as a matter of fact, crumbled in many instances and left everything at the mercy of chaos and anarchy, which ensued in large parts of the country, resulting in many casualties so far and in a popular state of mind which led hundreds of thousands to break into armouries and loot weapons for "self-defence", aimless intentions or criminal goals. A massive wave of destruction of public, private and institutional property ensued, with many criminal bands and illegal traffickers of immigrants, drugs and weapons finding a "burned soil" for further criminal activities.

This situation of complete disorder and lack of security was also bound to bring about another wave of tens of thousands of refugees sailing and landing in neighbouring Italy, and forcing it to proclaim an emergency situation, too.

Under these circumstances, the Albanian Parliament proclaimed the State of Emergency, which in many parts has not been effective because, among other things, many areas are under rebel control. The Government of National Reconciliation, formed on the basis of the broadest possible consensual coalition of all political parties, is very actively involved in solving two major issues, restoration and maintenance of law and order, and preparing and leading the country to new parliamentary elections, due in June this year.

After detailed analysis of this crisis, in close interinstitutional consultation, it was decided unanimously to appeal formally for international assistance. The President of the Republic, the Prime Minister and all the political parties addressed a formal request to the Western European Union, for a group of countries to assist in restoring and maintaining law and order, resolving the security situation, guaranteeing distribution of humanitarian aid, and protecting lines of communication, and for international community missions to start operating in the country through a multinational police protection force.

The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe responded swiftly to the deteriorating situation in one of its member States, endorsed the appointment of the former Austrian Chancellor, Dr. Franz Vranitzky, as Personal Representative for Albania of the Chairman-in-Office, and fully supported his active and vigorous engagement in the Albanian crisis. Dr. Vranitzky's two formal contacts with the Albanian authorities, immediately after his designation as Personal Representative, led to a number of recommendations on his part, the priority one being the formation of a multinational force by way of a coalition of the willing.

The Council of Ministers of the European Union addressed the Albanian crisis with utmost seriousness and in its conclusions of 24 March 1997 affirmed the determination to play the major role in helping Albania return to political stability and restore internal security. It sent two missions to Albania to assess the situation and agreed on a package approach to deal with the crisis. It decided to cooperate within the coordinating framework of OSCE. The European Union also decided to set up an Advisory Mission to Albania to advise on humanitarian, economic, political and security-related developments. In its efforts to assist Albania to establish a viable police force, the Council welcomed the ongoing efforts of certain member States to assemble a multinational protection force to meet the request of the Albanian Government.

At its latest meeting, on 27 March 1997, the Permanent Council of OSCE, as the only pan-European security organization, having listened closely to the appeal analysis, arguments and requests of Albania, as well as the recommendations of the Personal Representative of the Chairman-in-Office, the information provided by the head of the European Union mission to Albania, and the conclusions of the European Council, discussed and analysed the situation in detail and decided on a comprehensive, rapid action of the international community to address the Albanian crisis. The organization decided to establish an OSCE presence in Albania in cooperation with the Albanian authorities and to provide the coordinating framework for other international institutions, including the Council of Europe, to play their part, in their respective areas of competence, in the fields of democratization, the media, human rights, and election preparation and monitoring. The overall coordination of efforts will be ensured by Dr. Vranitzky as Personal Representative of the Chairman-in-Office who, in turn, will immediately take steps to establish the OSCE presence.

The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe has taken note of the official appeal made by the Albanian authorities to a group of countries for assistance in resolving the security situation, appreciates that certain States are willing to meet those official requests, and expects any assistance to be given in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, OSCE principles and appropriate action by the Security Council.

Annex II

Decision No. 160 of the Permanent Council of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, adopted at the 108th plenary meeting, on 27 March 1997

Recalling Permanent Council Decision No. 158, the Permanent Council further decides to establish an OSCE presence in Albania in cooperation with the Albanian authorities and to provide the coordinating framework within which other international organizations can play their part in their respective areas of competence, in support of a coherent international strategy, and in facilitating improvements in the protection of human rights and basic elements of civil society.

1. In cooperation with other international organizations, such as the Council of Europe, the OSCE will provide advice and assistance, in particular in the following fields:

- Democratization, the media and human rights;

- Election preparation and monitoring.

Furthermore, OSCE will explore other possibilities, including monitoring the collection of weapons.

The Chairman-in-Office will immediately prepare steps to establish the OSCE presence as soon as possible, and will report back promptly to the Permanent Council, which will take any necessary decisions without delay.

The overall coordination of the efforts of the international community will be ensured by Dr. Vranitzky as Personal Representative of the Chairman-in-Office. He will report to the Permanent Council on progress achieved.

The Permanent Council welcomes the initiative of the European Union to dispatch without delay an advance team with OSCE participation to prepare the ground for the establishment of an advisory mission within this framework.

The time-frame for the OSCE presence will be reviewed by the Permanent Council after the holding of elections.

2. The Permanent Council

Has taken note of the official appeal made by the Albanian authorities to a group of countries for assistance in resolving the security situation in Albania;

Appreciates that certain participating States are willing to meet this official request;

Expects any assistance to be given in accordance with the United Nations Charter and OSCE principles and in accordance with appropriate action by the United Nations Security Council;

Expects to be informed on any further steps to be taken in this context; and

Decides to remain seized of this matter at all stages.

Annex III

Conclusions of the Council of the European Union
at its meeting on 24 March 1997

1. The Council had an in-depth exchange of views on the situation in Albania on the basis of the report of the European Union mission that visited Albania from 17 to 19 March. It expressed appreciation for the mission's work and discussed further steps to be taken.

2. The Council reaffirmed the determination of the European Union to play the major role which was its responsibility in helping Albania to return to political stability and restore internal security, as well as in providing humanitarian assistance and in working with the international financial institutions on support for wider economic reforms.

3. Recognizing that Albania is a member of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), it noted also that many OSCE countries not members of the European Union have important roles to play and that OSCE has special experience and authority in a number of fields, notably in promoting a democratic process as well as supervising and monitoring elections. The Council accordingly expressed its support for the efforts undertaken by the current Chairman of OSCE, in particular concerning the mission entrusted to former Austrian Chancellor Vranitzky, which deserved to be supported and further strengthened. The Council decided that the European Union would cooperate within the coordinating framework of OSCE. It looked to the Council of Europe and other international organizations to play their part also within this framework in their respective areas of competence.

4. In this context the Council addressed the question of aid to Albania in the areas of humanitarian, economic and financial assistance, security and the preparation of future elections.

5. The Council decided to take the initiative of setting up an Advisory Mission to Albania within the framework of paragraph 3, to advise on humanitarian, economic, political and security-related developments. It would also assess the need for and feasibility of further assistance, taking account of the security situation and bearing in mind the particular problem of illegal migrants.

6. In order to prepare the ground for the Advisory Mission, the Council decided to dispatch an advance team without delay. This advance team, to which, in the spirit of paragraph 3, representatives of other international organizations would be invited, would make recommendations on the composition of the Advisory Mission and facilitate the arrival of humanitarian assistance.

7. The Council noted the need for humanitarian aid, and welcomed the intention of the European Commission's Humanitarian Office to respond generously to the immediate needs and to supply food and medicines. It also noted that further humanitarian assistance would be available by pre-positioning foodstocks as soon as security conditions allowed. It recalled the possibility of financing, under

the Humanitarian Aid Regulation, efforts to ensure that aid would be accessible to those for whom it was intended.

8. The Council noted the Commission's intention to focus future PHARE assistance on areas directly related to the relaunching of economic activity and the reform of public administration and of the media; and that financial support would have to be subject to close coordination with the international financial institutions.

9. The Council stressed that economic and financial support would also be subject to the re-establishment of the necessary secure environment.

10. The Council considered it important to assist Albania in the re-establishment of a viable police force and decided that the European Union would support this process through the appropriate measures, such as training. The Council also underlined the importance of assisting this process through appropriate monitoring and considered that the European Community Monitoring Mission could make a contribution to this effort.

11. Given present conditions of security in Albania, the Council welcomed the ongoing efforts of certain member States to assemble, at the request of the Government of Albania, a multinational protection force under the appropriate international aegis to help create a secure environment for the safe provision of international assistance.

12. The Council asked the appropriate Council instances to prepare a joint action for the Advisory Mission referred to in paragraph 5.